

Establishing the need for reconstruction

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) is conducting an engineering and environmental study of the I-94 North-South Corridor. This study will determine what, if any, improvements to the corridor will be needed for it to serve the needs of the region and state for years to come. The initial review of the I-94 North-South Corridor reveals four key needs for rebuilding and redesigning the freeway:

To maintain a key link in the state and regional network

I-94 is the gateway to Wisconsin, with over 82,000 vehicles per day crossing the state line near Kenosha in 2004. It serves the local economy in Kenosha, Racine and Milwaukee counties and also serves the entire southeast Wisconsin region. I-94 has national implications as an important freeway connection across the northern United States. The freeway provides links to the Port of Milwaukee, General Mitchell International Airport and three Amtrak stations. It is currently used by three inter-city bus service providers.

To replace an aging infrastructure

I-94 was originally built between the late 1950's and the early 1960's, except for the Airport Spur that opened in 1978. The original concrete pavement has worn and cracked, and water has run through to the gravel base. Segments have been resurfaced with asphalt two, three and even four times. While these actions smoothed the surface, they did not address cracks in the original pavement or voids in the base.

To improve safety and operations

Between 2000 and 2004, there were 3,987 crashes on the freeway mainline in the corridor, resulting in seven fatalities. There were another 1,139 crashes on the connecting ramps, frontage roads and cross roads that resulted in seven more fatalities. The most common types of freeway crashes in the corridor are driving off the road. This crash type is typically caused by substandard design, such as tight curves or inadequate banking, and lack of shoulder space or areas to recover from an incident. The next most common crash types in the corridor, sideswipes and rear-end crashes, are usually caused by traffic congestion along with design concerns. The areas with the highest crash rates in the corridor are in Milwaukee County in the Mitchell Interchange and the approaches from the west, east and south, including the Plainfield curve (I-43/94 just south of Howard Avenue). In these areas, crashes occur at up to seven times the rate as on other urban freeways in Wisconsin.

To accommodate future traffic

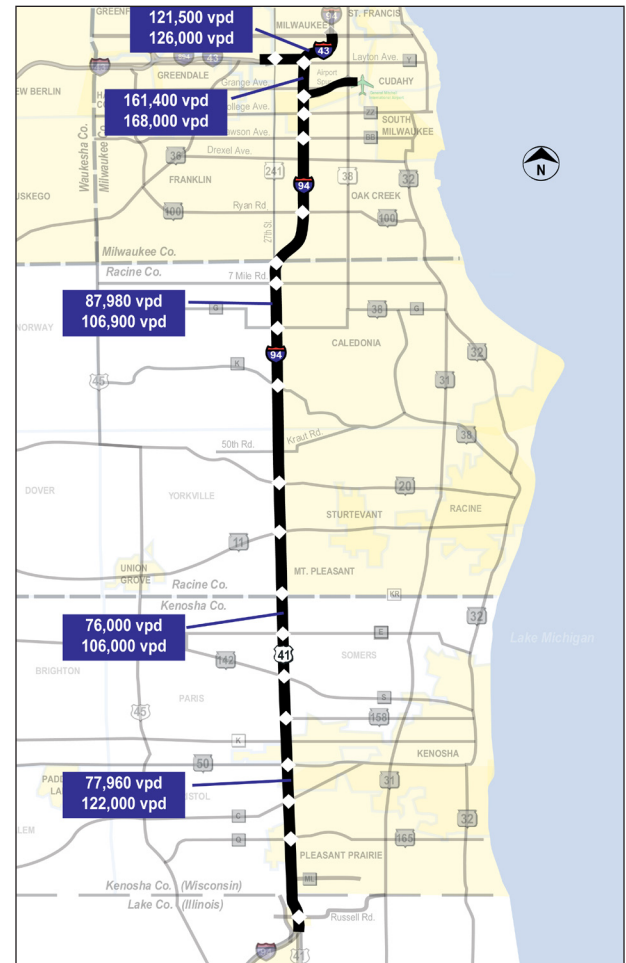
The I-94 North-South Corridor study is using traffic forecasts for the year 2035 to determine the design needs for the freeway. Traffic in the corridor has already grown by 17% to 31% in the past ten years, and growth is expected to continue through 2035 (see map). As traffic grows in Kenosha and Racine counties, motorists can expect congestion by 2035 that is very similar to the existing traffic near the Plainfield curve. In Milwaukee County, the traffic growth will cause congestion to deteriorate to severe levels, especially on segments north of Rawson Avenue. To address this growth, the study is examining how redesigning or expanding the freeway will help traffic flow in the future.

What do you think?

The I-94 North-South Corridor study is committed to gaining public input and feedback on all study activities. If you have comments on the needs identified above, or if you feel there are other needs in the freeway corridor that should be addressed in a future project, contact the study team by phone, e-mail or letter.

I-94 North-South Corridor traffic forecasts

Top number - 2004 data
Bottom number - 2035 forecast
vpd = vehicles per day



Study area boundaries

The I-94 North-South Corridor study is examining the corridor from the Mitchell Interchange area in Milwaukee to just south of the Illinois state line. The study area also includes the WIS 119 Airport Spur to Milwaukee's General Mitchell International Airport.

The I-94 North-South Corridor study area includes the following features:

- The corridor includes about 35 miles of freeway on I-94, I-43 and I-894.
- The study is examining about three miles of freeway on I-43, I-94 and I-894 to cover all approaches into and through the Mitchell Interchange.
- There are 17 service interchanges in the study corridor (freeway to street/roadway) and two freeway-to-freeway interchanges (the Mitchell Interchange and the Airport Spur interchange).
- In Racine and Kenosha counties, the study is evaluating approximately 48 miles of frontage roads that run parallel to both the east and west sides of I-94.

Anticipated corridor timeline

Mid 2006

Purpose and need defined, design concepts presented

End of 2006

Range of alternatives presented with basic information on costs and impacts

Mid 2007

Full evaluation of alternatives with public input

End of 2007

Formal public hearing on draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that documents the need for the project and describes alternatives and their impacts

Early 2008

Final EIS documents the public hearing input and presents a preferred alternative

Mid 2008

Federal government issues Record of Decision

How to stay involved

The I-94 North-South Corridor study is going to great lengths to gather public input. In early 2006, a total of 540 people attended a series of four community workshops to literally draw concepts and ideas on plan maps. In May and June of 2006, the study team hosted a series of public information meetings to review these concepts and discuss key purpose and need data. The study team has also met with dozens of legislators, elected officials and local government staff and more than 30 community groups and organizations.

You or your organization has several options to stay involved in the study:

- The I-94 North-South Corridor study features a **Web site** that provides a wealth of information about the corridor and the study process, including maps, a project timeline, frequently-asked questions (known as FAQs) and a scanned copy of the 1996 environmental assessment from Kenosha and Racine counties.
- The study will include a number of **community workshops and public meetings** throughout the course of the study. These events offer the chance to talk and work directly with project staff to review study progress, offer ideas and provide feedback on concepts and plans.

- Project **newsletters** will be published periodically to keep stakeholders up to speed on event dates, project milestones and key study concepts. Call or e-mail WisDOT using the contact information provided to be added to the newsletter mailing list.
- Any stakeholders can **request a meeting** with WisDOT and project staff to discuss the project with any size group, from three to three hundred (or even larger!).

Contact information

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